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ANALYSIS: Human Microchipping Poses Dangers to Health, Privacy

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WASHINGTON, April 30 (RIA Novosti), Lyudmila Chernova – Although hardly a novel idea, microchipping humans arouses justified concerns about risks to health and privacy, experts told RIA Novosti Wednesday.

“Along with the potential risks to health, there is a real risk to freedom and privacy, one of the key purposes of RFID is the tracking technology. Besides, numbering people is very dehumanizing. It turns you into a barcode on the package of meat that’s get tracked like inventory,” said Dr. Katherine Albrecht, an RFID microchip and consumer privacy expert.

Katina Michael, an associate professor at the University of Wollongong, echoed the opinion, stating that implanting automatic identification technology for non-medical purposes could entail the total loss of the right to privacy.

“There is a grave danger in it, as someone who gets an implant does not have control over bodily privacy. They cannot remove the implant on their own accord. They do not know when someone is attempting to hack into their device, no matter how proprietary the code that is stored on the device, and no matter whether the implant has built-in encryption,” Michael told RIA Novosti.

In 2007 Albrecht and Associated Press Reporter Todd Lewan revealed to the public studies that showed microchips cause cancer when they are implanted into laboratory animals. The finding led to the suspension the VeriChip company’s work.

“In our research we found that between one and ten percent of laboratory animals implanted with radio frequency microchips developed cancer adjacent to and even surrounding the microchips,” Albrecht said.

“Pacemakers can also cause cancer, but in a case of a pacemaker where the alternative is literally dying, it is worth the risk. However, in a case of something like an identification microchip or dosages of drugs being delivered to the body, that does not make any sense. Most people would prefer to simply take those drugs themselves than run the risk of an implant,” she added.

Dr. Michael also explained that implanting microchips is not new in the health industry, as society has already adopted implantables for a variety of uses. However, implantables for medical applications or for the identification of animals have a number of documented health side effects in line with Dr. Albrecht’s opinion.

“People with microstimulators have described ... varying levels of neurological response that were not as prescribed, ... or health implications such as infection, or even ongoing stress,” said Michael, adding that there are a whole gambit of health issues that no one is really studying properly.

The expert claimed that these kinds of technologies are being tested already, but have not yet been approved by the FDA for use as medical devices.

However, Albrecht said that the FDA appears to have never looked at the studies pointing to the dangers.

“One of the things I learned is that the FDA relies on the company that’s looking for the approval to provide the evidence of the safety and of the danger of the product. They don’t do independent research, and I think there is a very serious potential to having the companies be the ones that determine the safety of their own product,” she said.

The VeriChip Corporation implanted identification microchips into diabetic and Alzheimer’s patients as a trial with Blue Cross Blue Shield in 2007. The trial was stopped due to cancer risks.

In recent years, advocates of the technology have promised neural implants that could



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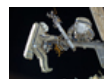


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stimulate the brain to help people with depression, implants that would deliver certain amounts of medication which may be remote controllable. The technologies involved are not new, and neither is the argument on their appropriateness.

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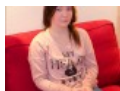
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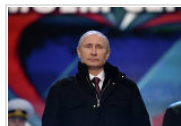
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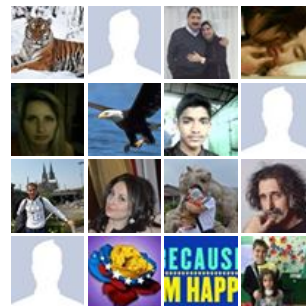
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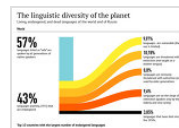
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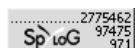
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